DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 924 HE 008 479

AUTHOR Klebanoff, Howard
TITLE Legislative Review: War, Peace, or Armed Truce?
INSTITUTION George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. Inst. for Educational Leadership.
PUB DATE Mar 76
NOTE 8p.; Remarks made at an invitational seminar on Innovation, Outcomes, and the State Budgeting Process (San Diego, California March 22-24, 1976).
AVAILABLE FROM Institute for Educational Leadership, Suite 310, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20036 ($0.50)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Responsibility; Administrator Role; *Finance Reform; Government Role; *Interprofessional Relationship; *Legislators; *Post Secondary Education; *Program Evaluation; *School Administration

ABSTRACT

Educators and politicians share a problem of communication that will have dire consequences for education. Legislators see that educators engage in much so-called evaluation, and collect carloads of data, but are rarely critical of existing programs or truly innovative in others. Legislators are accused of not understanding education, and of interfering with educational processes, while educators seem unable to give straightforward, factual answers. Legislators see educators fighting among themselves for money, and demanding more, but unable to take a stand on how money should be raised. While legislators may be supportive of postsecondary education, they feel betrayed because of the games educators play. However, legislative reform, budget reform, and program evaluation are movements in need of one another. One element that is needed is a complete and mutually comprehensible information system; this may assist the dialogue and movement toward reform. (Author/MSE)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED132924

INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

THE
GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

Suite 310
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Samuel Halperin
Director
(202) 833-1737

Education Policy
Fellowship Program
(202) 223-3415

Educational Staff Seminar
(202) 293-3166

The Associates Program
(202) 785-4991

Leadership Training Institute
(202) 833-9051

Postsecondary Education
Convening Authority
(202) 833-2745

"Options on Education"
over National
Public Radio
(202) 833-9178

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE008479

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION CONVENING AUTHORITY

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW: WAR, PEACE OR ARMED TRUCE?

The Honorable Howard Klebanoff

Chairman
House Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Hartford, Connecticut

Remarks at an Invitational Seminar on
"Innovation, Outcomes, and the State Budgeting Process"

San Diego, California
March 22 - 24, 1976

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION CONVENING AUTHORITY

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW: WAR, PEACE OR ARMED TRUCE?

by

The Honorable Howard Klebanoff
Chairman
House Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Hartford, Connecticut

Remarks at an invitational seminar on
"Innovation, Outcomes and the State Budgeting Process"
San Diego, California
March 22 - 24, 1976

When I was first elected to the legislature, someone gave me the following description of what I could look forward to:

> "You are entering a survival training course in the Mojave Desert. You will find that you have neither the time nor the information you need to come to grips with the complex issues and problems. What you accomplish will be in no way commensurate with the agony you will undergo and the effort you will make. You will see principles go by the wayside. You will be accused of creating problems and of failing to solve them. You will become frustrated, angry and disgusted. To the extent you accomplish anything, it will be in spite of the system not because of it."

I have found the above statement particularly accurate when we consider the problem of dialogue between educators and legislators. You, by your position, are stereotyped as educators and classified as 'educators,' just as I am stereotyped and classified as a 'politician.' Together we share a problem of communication and it has dire consequences for education.

At a meeting this past year of state education commissioners of each of the fifty states in Laconia, New Hampshire, in discussing critical issues facing American education, two recurrent topics listed were: increasing public disillusionment with the apparent failure of schools to provide pupils with basic skills, and growing hostility on the part of state legislatures and local taxpayers to the burden of continually increasing educational expenditures with little apparent effort of educators to control rising costs.

Legislators, I assure you, feel the same issues are involved in higher education. State governments are and will be the chief source of funding for higher education. Legislators hear educators accuse us of either not understanding the issues in higher education or of knowing the issues but responding in a short-sighted or politically expedient manner. Legislators, however, look at the request for larger budgets, new programs and ask:

- "Will expanding the present system without meaningful reforms provide meaningful education for students?"

- "Can we meet the demand for relevance in education by developing new curricula when we do not really know what a relevant education is?"

. Will providing more money for various programs mean anything unless we assess and know how effectively available resources are being utilized?

. Will we really be educating our students for life in the 21st century?"

In the past educators have been allowed to spend without question. The education constituency and various lay educational groups were very successful in getting legislative support for special bills and increased spending because they were able to coalesce around issues. This is all changed now. Politicians are not willing to accept glib explanations from educators. The constituencies of politicians are demanding answers, becoming issue-oriented, demanding accountability of the political process, and accountability of the political process leads to accountability in other areas; for example, how are we spending money in education and for what purposes?

Legislators argue that the 70's must see a change in the relationship between educators and politicians. Too often, however, legislators feel the appearance of change is substituted for real change, that too often new names are given to old bandaids. Liberals and conservatives alike are demanding answers, demanding change, demanding relevant data and information systems and, most of all, are asking for help. Legislators are interested in educational accountability in order to determine priorities, to eliminate ineffective programs, to improve the effectiveness of good programs, in short, to obtain factual information on which to base complex and difficult legislative decisions.

As legislators look at programs we see that educators engage in much so-called evaluation and collect carloads of data. But we wonder for what purposes, since rarely are educators critical of an existing program or truly innovative in others. Nor do they serve as advocates for students. Most often educators appear to be protecting a little bureaucracy, a power base.

We politicians are tired of being frustrated by educators, of being attacked and criticized by educators, of being told directly or indirectly that legislators cannot begin to realize how 'complex' educational programs are. We hear educators argue about the need for autonomy, for keeping politics out of the educational area. This is a myth. Representatives from all areas of higher education are strong and active lobbyists who in many ways know the political system very well, and who are very adept at fighting for additional monies, new buildings, new programs, and who are not necessarily concerned with budget reform.

Legislators view educators in a suspect way. We question whether educators are aware of the presseing needs in our society. We wonder why educators are unable to give us straightforward factual answers. We wonder why educators seem to give us generalities or educational jargon rather than relevant data. Terms like 'value-added,' 'incentive grant,' 'outcome-oriented approach' are viewed in a suspect manner. Some legislators see these not as helpful tools for obtaining information, but rather as deliberate attempts to confuse them.

Legislators, in attempting to make budget decisions, are often shocked to see educators fighting each other for expansion of campuses or new programs, or to see educators refusing to utilize existing facilities or faculty, or to see educators refusing to take a stand on how money should be raised, yet demanding millions of additional dollars

Legislators have three main tasks -- representing their constituents, lawmaking, and evaluation. The function of lawmaking is seen by most legislators as the the dominant role of the legislature. Maybe because it's a satisfying role, since we often define success in terms of bills passed or supported and because observors judge legislators by their use of the legislative machinery used in turning out laws.

Lawmaking is forward-looking, it is concerned with a new law, with future conditions, with how to remedy a problem or respond to pressure. A problem with lawmaking is that it breeds a feeling that laws are self-fulfilling, that the act of passing a bill is tantamount to achieving a desired end. Our legislative machinery has a tremendous capacity to establish new programs but little capacity to make them work. This brings us to the area of legislation evaluation-oversight which encompasses budget reform, but also much more.

This function requires us to review and evaluate the conduct of the executive branch and the effects of state government. To make good laws, we must know what happened in the past. We must know what works and what does not work. We must know whether a program's objectives are being achieved and at what costs. We must know how effective a program is and whether it is more or less effective than some other program with the same or similar objectives; and what factors make for the success or failure of a program.

We legislators develop a habit of looking at our calendars for tomorrow trusting that the business of yesterday is having the positive consequences we had planned. Review and evaluation is hard work. Our failure to do it has led to the growth of the executive branch and the erosion of legislative power.

Yet, nationally legislatures are flexing their muscles, are determined to prove that they are a coequal branch of government with the executive. Legislative staff, retrieval and information systems have grown rapidly in the last several years. Since 1971, Connecticut has established on Office of Legislative Research, an Office of Fiscal Analysis, a Legislative Commissioners office which assigns legal staff to all standing committees, a program review committee, as well as the use of computers for policy analysis. Yet, representatives of the institutions of higher education seem unaware of the changes occurring in the legislative process and do not realize that legislators really want information on which to base decisions. Legislators are seeing that it's hard to develop information by which to assess the effectiveness of a program. Often we receive merely a narrative of the program. Too often we are overwhelmed with information, and 'evaluation' is equated with more piles of paper. For evaluation to work, legislators must know how to evaluate the evaluations, and evaluators must learn how to collect relevant data for legislators.

Legislative reform, budget reform, and program evaluation are movements in need of one another. It takes staff, skill, data, information, retrieval and analysis systems to make evaluation work. Likewise, it includes performance auditing, an examination of whether programs have been administered faithfully, efficiently and effectively. It includes compliance audit, the way administrative behavior coincides with legislative intent and also an operative audit which examines policies, procedures, time and whether equipment and facilities can be more effectively used. Another part is program audit which explores the effectiveness

of programs and whether and to what extent objectives are being accomplished. We not only need skilled auditors to do this but legislative staff to make use of reports prepared by auditors and to give brief and concise summaries to their harried legislators.

As legislators recieve information we must be careful how we use it. We must be careful about invading the academic area, whether it be in mandating teacher loads, setting fees, decreeing programs, or in restricting out-of-state students. Yet, as we wrestle with the information we receive and with many other pressing problems, we lose sympathy with institutions that appear to want to do business as usual. We may be very supportive of postsecondary education but feel betrayed because of the games educators play or do not play.

Survival of higher education depends on an accomodation with the state government. It also means that institutions should take the lead in defending their roles, missions, and goals. However, in doing so, institutions have the responsibility of demonstrating that they are aware of the changes taking place in government, in society, and in student needs.

Educators must realize that legislative staff will now challenge the information submitted by educators. Educators must realize that higher education has to compete for scarce dollars and that higher education has reached a new low in terms of priority for state funding.

Legislators see educators overwhelming us with surveys and yet little attempt is being made by educators to adjust to the problem of utilizing limited or existing resources. Educators are often viewed as merely striving to protect a power base and not responding to the needs of the student-consumer, the market place or the funding sources. Educators are giving legislators the impression that they will continue to do the same and hope that conditions will get better next year.

Legislators are increasingly aware of the variety of means to provide postsecondary education. As The Commission on Nontraditional Education reported in 1973, over 32 million persons are engaged in such nontraditional education compared to 8 or 9 million in colleges or universities. Legislators are also aware of the variety of technology available and yet the information legislators receive often ignores these new resources.

I find it interesting that no educator has ever approached me about budget but has merely sought more money and/or less constraints. Likewise, few legislators see the problem as one of budget reform, although almost all would agree with the need for better information. As Lyman Glenny stated recently in a speech in St. Petersburg, Florida:

> "Governors and legislators are aware, sometimes seemingly more acutely than educators, that the climate and environment for postsecondary education is in a volatile state of flux. They want the state-level agencies and the institutions to take a more studied and aggressive stand on how and in what dimensions each campus will fit into the new spectrum of agencies and modes of education. What they really want is probably impossible to provide in absolute detail. But what they observe is that which is reported by the presidents, some tightening up on courses and programs and on number of faculty, but not much; and a great deal of laissez-faire thinking about the future."

As I have been arguing, there is a desperate need for vital data, for fact sharing and dialogue. There may be problems as to exactly what information is collected or how it is used, but dialogue is essential. For example, politicians and educators both want information about students but educators often want to know whether or not a student succeeded in obtaining a job. Educators collect information on faculty course loads for scheduling, while legislators may seek it to determine if professors are earning their money.

It is a time for a reappraisal of budgeting for both legislators and educators and for examining how we collect and utilize data. Legislators are forced to justify their decisions to their constituents, to taxpayers and others. Academics must realize, therefore, that there will be no truce and that they will have to answer questions convincingly...or face the consequences.

Concepts such as zero-based budgeting, program performance budgeting, formula budgeting may help but are not the end-all and, as I mentioned earlier, neither are various concepts like value-added. I realize it's frustrating to educators but no matter what concepts are used, or what information is supplied or what surveys may demonstrate, ultimately the legislative decision will be a political one.

Legislators want to see that institutions have good administrators, that policy decisions seem relevant to today's society, that estimates of revenues and expenditures are realistic, that there is good internal budgeting and accounting after the appropriations are made, and that facilities are being well utilized. If information dialogue can demonstrate this, then the political decisions may be more supportive of institutional needs.

Legislators and educators must realize that for too many programs there is a lack of data. For some of the programs, it is unlikely that the "right" data can ever be collected and reported. Under these circumstances, the proper approach is to design less perfect measures for which data are available or can be acquired. Rather than waiting for the ideal, some data bearing on program effectiveness is better than none at all.

There are needs for a complete and operational data base -- one that would utilize data to measure results against objectives, to assess cost effectiveness of programs and to establish priorities for available resources, but the data collected must be relevant to the legislator as well as the educator.

When I asked our budget analyst from Connecticut for suggestions, she stated that educators should plan together a standard format for collection and reporting of data and that the legislature should set certain priorities, eliminate artificial deadlines, and that both groups should eliminate the maze that a budget must go through before it is adopted. Likewise, the data needed should be geared into the system for continued collection and easy access. Outcome data should include not just the number of graduates produced, but quality; i.e., a follow-up of what happens to the graduates in terms of becoming a contributing member of society.

It was also suggested that a budget broken down by programs with outcome data will demonstrate what is being produced and the quality of the product, which can then be compared by programs within an institution and between institutions.

The budget analyst hoped that such comparisons could demonstrate to the educator where change is needed by showing:

a. what programs should be eliminated and what new ones should be started

b. what other institutions are producing more or better products in the same program areas, and therefore give ideas of ways to improve

c. possible areas of shared programs between institutions

d. the need to search for more innovative and possibly cheaper ways to teach and, therefore, force a shake-up of the status quo.

In stressing budget reform, please understand that legislators want to know about all sources of revenue collected, including federal grants, extension funds, auxiliary service fees, private fees and others. Likewise, legislators should look carefully at the controls they have placed on institutional spending or on the power the executive branch may have to withhold funds or approve or disapprove of hiring or filling positions, especially in times of fiscal crisis. If educators have the data, have the necessary understanding of the political arena, then educators will have earned the right to demand the flexibility to operate and to make their own decisions subject only to standard post-auditing procedures.

With dialogue, with an understanding of our respective problems and responsibilities, educators and legislators can each improve the way our respective institutions respond to today's needs. We each must realize that we are dealing with limited resources. We must not stereotype each other. We must find common ground on which to work together -- perhaps helping the student to recieve an appropriate education can be the starting point.

We legislators want to build a sound educational system for each student. Legislators and educators each have expertise which can benefit this goal. Educators have expertise in determining what is needed educationally. Legislators have expertise in making the political process respond to these needs. Our goal should be similar not dissimilar. Legislators and educators should not be at war with each other. We must not share the goal of self-perpetuation with which regretfully, we are both deeply concerned, educators of continuing outmoded programs, legislators of continuing in office. We must instead share the problems of critical analysis and the goal of self-renewal.

Much of the information legislators need can be supplied by educators. You, the educators, must help determine the educational needs of institutions. You must help us, the politicians, to determine realistically what the budget needs are in today's world.

You can help us understand what legislative mandates are needed or which ones are unworkable. You can demonstrate what budget reforms are necessary and why.

You must become public relations experts and practical politicians. We both share the responsibility for helping today's students meet tomorrow's demands. We both realize the importance of education in today's society.

Educators and legislators should not merely coexist, should not merely confront each other. We should work together to see that the educational system and the political system are truly responsive to today's needs. We can work together, we must work together, but I hope we do so with a full understanding of each other's needs, problems, goals and responsibilities.